

VZCZCXRO3648
RR RUEHROV
DE RUEHKH #0979 1151015
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 251015Z APR 06
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2466
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS KHARTOUM 000979

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [EAID](#) [PREF](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: CG Juba Round-up April 24

¶1. Ethnic Fighting in Western Equatoria: During a routine patrol, 11 police officers returning to Yambio were attacked by Dinka bandits about 30 kilometers west of the town. UNMIS has located the bodies of two of the officers, and it presumes the other 9 dead. Because the police officers were all Zande, it is believed that the attacks were ethnically motivated. The culprits have not been caught.

¶2. Mundri Becoming Hub of Trade: The county of Mundri, located roughly halfway between Rumbek and both Yei and Juba, is becoming a hub of trade between Lakes State and Uganda. Roads in the county are in good condition, with most of the laterite surfacing intact. The county is currently divided by the Yei River, whose only bridge was destroyed in the war. The river can be forded by small trucks in the dry season, but is impassable when the water rises. This has blocked commercial road traffic between Rumbek and Juba, although trade should increase once the new bridge, currently under construction, is completed. The roads are also relatively good on the other side of the river and it is only about four hours by road to Juba, just over 100 km away.

¶3. Ikotos Slowly Recovering from Long War: Located at the base of an 8,000 ft peak near the Ugandan border, the small village of Ikotos is beginning to recover from the wars and insecurity that have plagued it for decades. During the civil war, the town was known to host many internally displaced persons (IDPs) who sought refuge in the mountains from the frequent fighting around Torit, located just to the north. These border mountains also served as a major sanctuary for Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which frequently raided the area. According to Celestio Ohisa, the County Commissioner for Ikotos, the situation is stabilizing as most of the IDPs have returned home and the LRA is no longer operating in the area. Within the town, a bustling new market has recently sprung up and villagers who moved onto the mountainside for protection are beginning to rebuild their homes on the plains, closer to their fields. The town lacks appropriate health care, educational facilities, and basic sanitation, and sick or injured residents must be driven over bumpy roads for several hours to reach the nearest hospital.

¶5. USAID Branding: While touring several State Department-funded refugee projects in remote corners of the South (septel), CG Juba officials have noticed that the USAID name and logo is prevalent in even the remotest parts of Southern Sudan. From AIDS prevention t-shirts with the USAID logo -- worn by many villagers and every participant in a regional health committee meeting in Tambura -- to a sign at the entrance of a renovated girl's school in Lui, there is ample evidence of the assistance given to Southern Sudan "from the American people."

